

County Cllr Anne Wight – Report for January 2020

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year, and I sincerely hope that the coming year may be one of peace and prosperity for all the residents of Ivinghoe Division. I would also like to welcome you to the final edition of my newsletter as your county councillor for Buckinghamshire County Council. With the new unitary Buckinghamshire Council starting on the 1st of April, it won't be long now until the brand new council comes into effect.

I would also like to thank all the residents and local businesses who kindly donated presents to our Christmas Present Appeal for children in care across Buckinghamshire. The gifts meant so much to the growing number of looked after children in our care for whom Christmas can be a very difficult time. Thanks very much on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council to everyone who took the time to remember our looked after children this Christmas.

New 'Council Access Points'

One of the key features of the new unitary Council will include improving the way that local residents can get on the spot access to council services. This will be through a network of new local bases called Council Access Points, supporting the new unitary council to be closer to its communities and making it simpler for people to get the information and support they need and nearer to where they live and work.

The Council Access Points (CAPs) will be based at the heart of local community life in existing buildings throughout Buckinghamshire. Staff will be on hand to help, people, and support them with online services.

Five 'Access Plus' centres, located in the current council offices in the county's main towns, will offer extra services from Monday to Friday for residents who have more complex enquiries.

Other Council Access Points will operate from existing buildings, such as libraries, spread across the county stretching from Buckingham in the north to Burnham in the south. The locations of these will be confirmed and promoted as part of the launch preparations for Buckinghamshire Council which will go live in April 2020.

Once the Council Access Points are up and running, Buckinghamshire Council will start work on the next phase. The ambition is to evolve the access points to create

wider one-stop community hubs based in multi-purpose buildings at the heart of community life.

Residents will also be able to get support from different services such as the police, town and parish councils, visitor services and community groups all in one place. We will ask residents and communities to help co-design these facilities to meet local needs.

Cllr Martin Tett, Leader of the Shadow Executive said: “Whilst we’re seeing a lot more people access our services online, we know that sometimes our residents need to speak to someone face to face. Having access points dotted across the county will mean that people will be able to speak to someone to get the help and advice they need, close to where they live. It’s really important that the new council doesn’t become distant from its communities so it makes absolute sense to use existing places like council offices and libraries that people are used to visiting, to provide local support and advice for those who need it.”

We are also in the process of setting up the Community Boards, which will replace the current Local Area Forums. The results from the recent consultation will be analysed to ensure resident input while the format of the Community Boards is finalized, so thank you very much if you were able to help us out with that consultation.

For those who may not know, the Community Boards are a way of bringing together Buckinghamshire Council councillors with local communities to help solve local issues and to provide a vital link between the council, elected councillors and communities. These local issues could include improving facilities for young people, tackling social isolation of older people or helping to set up a community bus. It is hoped that they will enable Buckinghamshire Council councillors to take decisions on local issues, alongside key partners including other community representatives, and allow Buckinghamshire Council councillors to work with communities to influence service design and delivery on local issues.

We want Community Boards to involve everyone in the local area who wants to make a difference and work with the new council to do this. We’re proposing that Buckinghamshire Council councillors from the local area would sit on their local board. To be effective, community boards would also need to include people and organisations from the local community such as fire services, police and health, residents, parish and town councils and young people.

Hopefully, Community Boards will give residents greater influence on how services are run locally as well as contact with elected members and key stakeholders.

The Freight Strategy Update

I am still actively working on the Freight Strategy with our officers. The Freight Strategy will ensure that we make use of optimal freight routes throughout our local area, allowing businesses to continue to thrive while preserving our environment and the amenity of our residential areas.

I know many of you have written to me with concerns about lorry traffic through our villages. To address your concerns, our Freight Strategy Officer, Graham Hillary, recently issued the following statement, which I have reproduced below:

"I must thank all the residents and businesses in the Ivinghoe Division for their patience and consideration during the Brownlow Bridge restriction period. It has been clear that some places have seen reduced Heavy Goods Vehicle flows whilst others have seen increased numbers. I appreciate the inconvenience experienced along with concerns about listed buildings, roads and the schools in the area. The restriction was introduced as a result of a Canals and Rivers Trust survey that raised concerns about the weight bearing capacity of the bridge. For safety reasons it was critical to restrict use of the bridge by large goods vehicles while we worked on how to proceed. In order to protect the structure from further deterioration and to support the local businesses that employ hundreds of residents, approval was given to repair the bridge and maintain its role as part of the highway infrastructure.

The role of the Brownlow Bridge moving forward will be as part of a wider area approach focused on delivering the adopted freight strategy. The strategy has clear objectives to:

- ensure HGV traffic stays off unsuitable roads, minimising the negative impact on residents and the environment;*
- promote the use of preferred routes for HGVs; and*
- Offer support for business to deliver the county's aspirations for growth.*

The proposal is being finalised for internal Bucks County Council approval, after which it is expected to be subject to public consultation. It is important that the approach is presented in the right forum to help gather constructive comment to help shape the final proposal. I look forward to the consultation and the opportunity to position what I believe is a good proposal, I welcome the chance to meet with many residents and work together to improve things in the area."

If you have a view on these issues, please write to the Freight Strategy team via the email address below:

freight@buckscc.gov.uk

NB More up to date information on this matter can be found at:
<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/news/repair-plans-for-ivinghoe-canal-bridge/>

Transport for Bucks Update

I met with the Capital Maintenance Programme team in November and was able to prioritise the remainder of Cheddington High Street for resurfacing works in Spring 2020. The resurfacing will be done from the tennis courts through the rest of the High Street, and Mentored Road down to the mini double roundabout on Station Road. The preliminary patching for this work started before Christmas, and hopefully the smoother surface will improve some of the vibration and noise disturbance from traffic for residents along Mentmore Road.

On another note, Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) was recently announced as the overall winner of the Institute of Asset Management (IAM) Global Award - "Improving Customer Service through Collaboration" at the Institute of Asset Management awards on 27 November 2019.

TfB was successful in winning by making a step change in improved customer service. This was achieved by focusing and engaging elected County Councillors and executive management on asset management principles, ongoing Member meetings and increased stakeholder engagement. The result is a far better customer journey as well as genuine improvements in the highways asset.

In attendance at the awards ceremony were Rob Smith, Director of Growth, Strategy and Highways Services at Buckinghamshire County Council, Andy Denman Operations Director for Ringway Jacobs and BCC political leaders along with the Transport for Buckinghamshire Asset team and Jacobs' colleagues, who have been instrumental in achieving this success, once more demonstrating this successful and collaborative partnership.

The IAM received a huge number of entries for their annual awards this year, with excellent entries from around the globe covering a wide range of sectors. Their judges felt that the quality of the nominations was exceptional, highlighting pioneering achievements, outstanding international practice and great leadership in asset management.

TfB was very pleased for the hard work and collaborative approach from both Officers and Members to be recognised by such a well-respected, professional body, particularly given the strength of competition, globally, and across all sectors. The award builds upon the recognition the Asset Management approach had through the achievement of ISO 55001 Accreditation and the very real benefits of achieving Band 3 DfT Incentive funding.

It's encouraging to see the service improvements for residents that TfB have made and hopefully will continue to make going forward.

Health and Wellbeing

I thought it might be useful to remind everyone of the Bucks Health and Wellbeing website initiatives which can be found on the main website below.

One thing worth pointing out on the overall page is the link to the Heads Up website which relates specifically to men's emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

Heads Up exists to help men stay happy. They have a toolbox that can help men overcome common issues like having trouble with sleeping, feeling low and money worries and even an online check-up to help you assess your wellbeing, as well as information on different ways to get support.

If you know a man that might be feeling a bit down or blue, have a look at our Support a Man page. Contacts are also available for men who might want to discuss some of the issues they are facing or anything which they are struggling with.

Do please check out the services on offer below, as well as ideas and tips on how we can all live healthier lives in 2020.

<http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/home>

<http://www.thisisheadsup.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelId=3717>

In closing, as this is my final submission as your county councillor for Buckinghamshire County Council, I would just like to say that I have felt very

privileged to have been elected to serve the Ivinghoe Division throughout the past three years. It has been really lovely to have met so many of you at various local events or through my work at BCC, and it has been a very enriching experience for me to have had a chance to help serve the local community. Going forward, I am certain that the new Buckinghamshire Council will benefit from all the support and goodwill which Ivinghoe Division residents and parish councils can provide, and I am sure that the new council working with our communities will go from strength to strength.